

CHAPTER 1

ENTERING AND LEAVING A UNIT

(Battalion (BN) Level Used as the Model)

AND

LEADERSHIP

- Entering a Unit
- Leaving a Unit
- Practical Ideas for a Commander's Spouse/Senior Leader Spouse
- Leadership Styles

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WHO IS A SENIOR SPOUSE? (Battalion Commander's Spouse/ Senior Leader Spouse)

When your military husband or wife reaches the level where he or she is considered a "senior military leader," what does that mean for you, the spouse? In today's military it can mean different things. If you choose to participate in the role of a senior spouse, your role is strictly voluntary. Military spouses do not have specifically assigned duties or responsibilities; this can be both good and bad. There are no job descriptions, no contractual assigned duties, or legal responsibility. However, being married to someone in the military often comes with certain expectations resulting from the military spouse's duty position and rank. The role that you choose and the extent to which you choose to fulfill that role is up to you.

On occasion the senior military leader may not be married, and another individual may be asked by this leader to assist with the expected "duties" of the senior spouse. If this occurs, and you are that individual, make sure that your expectations and those of the military senior leader are discussed and clarified to avoid role confusion.

The term used above--"senior military leader"--can mean both a Commander or a non-Commander in a senior staff position. There are often expectations of senior spouses, just because they are senior, whether their military spouse is in a Command position or not. Command has additional considerations and responsibilities when discussing a senior spouse position. Command is also for a limited amount of time; whereas you will always be regarded as a senior spouse after a certain point, no matter where your military spouse is in his/her career. You are often thought of as experienced and informed, if it is assumed or you actually have been, married to the military leader for awhile. (There are more "late," second, and third marriages, and combined families in the military now.) It is also sometimes assumed that you have access to "inside" information. While this is usually not accurate, experience does count. You can inform yourself and become aware of available resources to assist military family members, if you do not have much experience, and always improve your knowledge or gain new insights if you are an experienced spouse. As a Commander's spouse, you can be important to the "climate" of the unit by your participation and attitude.

The following was written with the Battalion Commander's spouse (BN CDR's spouse) in mind. The term "Command Team" has also been used in the Army, meaning a Commander and Spouse and is used sometimes in this handbook. It is often used at the Army's Pre-Command course (PCC) for the Command Team seminar (CTS), portion of the course for spouses at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Of course, the term "Command Team" can also mean those who serve the Commander in running the unit in other publications. The BN Command example was used, as it is a clear and relevant level to explain a Senior Spouse leadership position in the Army. Aspects of the following sections of this chapter can be useful to all Army Senior spouses (Commander's spouses or not) and spouses of other Services. The reader is encouraged to take whatever is useful. However, mention should be made of the difference between the Battalion (BN) and Brigade (BDE) levels regarding the

Commander's spouse. The BDE Commander's spouse does not interact as often or as directly with the Soldiers and Family Members of the BNs in the BDE, and is more of an adviser, coach, and mentor to the BN CDR spouses.

The BDE CDR spouse interacts more directly with the Soldiers and Family Members of the BDE Headquarters and Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) associated with the Headquarters but does not try to "run the BNs" for the BN spouses. The interaction between the BDE CDR Spouse and BN spouses has some similarities to that of the Division (DIV) CDR spouse and the BDE spouses within the DIV; however, the role of the BDE CDR spouse is becoming more involved, with an expanding range, as the Army transitions to its new structures. (See Chapter 2, Chain of Command, BCTs.)

Insert "BDE" or another unit or Service leadership title, for "BN" when reading the following, to see if it is applicable for you and your unit or organization. Some units are large; some are "non-traditional;" some are very geographically dispersed; some organizations have many nonmilitary civilian members and are not that closely related to the BN structure, etc. As a Senior Spouse read the following BN Command example and adapt as needed, always, with the foremost, positive attitude of trying to help families and "junior" spouses, now that you are trying to figure out what being a "Senior Spouse" is.

COMING INTO THE BATTALION (or your particular unit/organization)

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

It's important to consider your role as you prepare to enter the unit. Accepting the role as the senior spouse comes with certain expectations. Think about your command team role early as you make preparations for your arrival.

HOW TO APPROACH IT

The following guidelines may be effective in getting you off to a favorable start. In the period leading up to command, you might want to:

- Review unit composition and communication procedures; be aware of National Guard, Reserves, and/or individual augmentees, or other attached units.
- Talk, with your spouse/unit commander regarding expectations you each have.
- Ask your spouse/unit commander how he/she envisions your participation with the FRG. What role does he/she want you to have? How do you see your participation?
- If possible, attend the Pre-Command Course at Ft. Leavenworth.
- Formulate your individual and Command Team goals.

- Review deployment/reunion procedures with your spouse/unit commander, including forthcoming interaction with the Rear Detachment Commander (RDC) if a deployment may be scheduled.
- Decide methods for achieving your objectives.
- Look for Army resources both on line and within your military community
- Estimate and budget for the expenses you may encounter during command.

Discuss the responsibilities and commitments you intend to take on with your children, 0parents, in-laws, and friends. Assist others in knowing about and understanding, if possible, the changes that may occur in your routine.

BEFORE COMMAND BEGINS

- Meet and talk with the outgoing commander's spouse or command team. She/he may provide useful information to you. You may want to talk to her/him/her several times (if necessary by phone or e-mail). If not, graciously pose your questions and request guidance.
- Give yourself time to settle into your new home and attend to Family matters. Familiarize yourself with the military and civilian communities; learn about programs, facilities, and resources; get to know neighbors.
- Familiarize yourself with change of command ceremony (COC) and reception requirements, financial or otherwise.
- Know what your role will be at the COC and reception. Reacquaint yourself with military protocol. Be sensitive to the outgoing command team's wishes and arrangements; after all it is their ceremony. Mention tactfully any special requests for the change of command or reception (i.e., having someone videotape the ceremony or having your guest book at the reception).
- Have your guest list ready for the COC ceremony. Try to have complete, legible, up-to-date addresses. Be prompt in meeting the due date. Your military spouse, not you, will communicate with the unit staff regarding the COC.
- Consider your individual and/or command team gift philosophy, when you decide what you want to do personally. See Ideas for Gifts (page 22 of this chapter) for your thorough consideration of this topic.
- Check your local PX and gift store. It may be a good place to pick up small presents, posters for your spouse's office or the unit, such as branch slogans, plaques, and other mementos.
- Begin a journal, scrapbook and/ or continuity book.
- Be ready to attend a large number of varying social functions.
- Consider how much entertaining you both want to do; e.g., space in your home, how large a group, what supplies you have or may need, where to get needed supplies, and the style of entertaining that is most comfortable for you.

AS COMMAND BEGINS

- Develop a social roster, FRG roster, and/or any other spouse's roster as quickly as possible. Make a point to learn and use first names. Think about or consider your

best method to remember names, e.g. some people have a little notebook to jot down names after a conversation, others have mental association techniques to help remember new information.

- Agree on how you wish to be addressed by military and nonmilitary members. Avoid confusion by informing others, or gently restating your desired name after an introduction. Accept that some people may not comply with your request.
- Take the lead in socializing. Think about if you may want to open your home for social or other events.
- As soon as possible meet with other key spouses. That probably would mean the BN Command Sergeant Major's (CSM) spouse and the BN Executive Officer's (XO) spouse. Begin to get to know each other and begin to discuss each other's role in BN activities. Offer your support to the next higher level headquarters commander's spouse, also.
- Meet with the current FRG leader and/or the contracted FRSAS (Family Readiness Support Assistant). (FRSAs have now been approved down to the BN level for Forces Command.)
- Know what to expect at different spouses' gatherings. Does the unit have a spouse coffee group and with what membership criteria? Are the BN FRGs organized at different levels (Steering Committee down to Company/Battery/Troop)? What role will you play with the different groups? (See Matrix on page 26 of this chapter)
- Forge a strong working relationship with the unit S-1 personnel and chaplain. They are usually excellent resource people concerning unit personal and Family matters. (FYI: On every BN staff there are four, sometimes six, categories of functions called Shops. S-1 is Personnel; S-2 is Intelligence; S-3 is Operations; S-4 is Logistics; S-5 is Civil-Military Operations, and S-6 is Communications-Electronics. You usually hear about the first four.)
- Keep notes and files on EVERYTHING regarding BN activities you are associated with. Prepare after-action reports for major projects with contacts, supplies, etc. (see page 14 of this chapter). All details and information may be invaluable to the next commander's spouse and a useful reference for you.
- Develop a system for receiving any paperwork that needs your attention.
- Use name tags at functions.
- Consider carefully what you advocate as others will see you as a role model.
- Attend as many BN events that include the BN Commander's spouse/Senior Spouse Leader as possible. Give people the opportunity to see that you are interested, that you care about knowing others, and that the unit matters to you and you want to support it.
- Show your interest in people! They may be shy and even unwilling to approach you. Take the initiative! Introduce yourself, start conversations, and ask friendly questions.
- Recognize that there is truth in the saying "it's lonely at the top." Seek support from your military spouse. Develop friendships outside the unit. Network with peers (including other BN Commander's spouses if possible). Share public information, support, and concerns. Be there for each other.
- Take time for yourself although it may seem impossible. Allow yourself personal space and time for your family.

FRUSTRATIONS

Keep in mind, you are a newcomer. BN spouses may welcome you with warmth and open arms -- or they may hold back and come around slowly. Do not take it personally. They may have lost a friend with the departure of the last BN commander's spouse. Give them time to respond to the change and their sadness.

The individuals in the unit may be different from what you expected; you may need to adjust your perspective.

You are no longer one of the gang, depressing though that realization may be. You may wonder why the unit spouses do not call you to go out to eat, to go shopping, or to a movie. Think back to when you were a Lieutenant's or Captain's spouse -- did you run around with the battalion commander's spouse and spend most of your time with her? Probably not. This is no different. Don't be discouraged. Accept that there will be some limitations that come with the territory. Turn to your peers outside the battalion for the deeper friendships and special closeness you may seek.

Your relationships with the spouses in your BN and your peers should not be the same. For example, other outside BN commanders' spouses and senior leader spouses are your peer group, not junior spouses in the BN. Recognize the fine line between friend and confidante. Choose your friends wisely. It is nice to have a trusted buddy and confidante, but it should be somebody unrelated to the BN and preferable not anyone younger than you. Don't be perceived as having favorites among the spouses in your BN. Spot the informal leaders in your group and draw upon their talents, ideas, and energies.

As the BN commander's spouse/senior leader spouse you may find the spouses questioning you regarding BN-related decisions. Try to be understanding, but also frank. Tell them that official Army business and decisions come through official Army authority, and that is relayed directly from them. You are a spouse too and do not have "inside" information. You relay information that you were asked to by official Army after it has been initially given. Keep BN business issues and Family and social issues separate.

Will everyone like you? You may not please the entire group--but as long as you are fair and give guidance to the best of your ability you will do your volunteer job as a senior leader. Keep a sound perspective on who you are and where you are.

Don't be surprised if people treat you in a stereotypical way, especially in the beginning. They may see only the position or the role and not you, the person. Be patient and know that people will initially only see you by this position and you must behave accordingly to earn their respect.

Error may occur in the most carefully crafted plans. Try to prepare and act wisely while also considering your circumstances. Give it your best effort.

IMPLICATIONS

BN spouses and Soldiers may expect that you will arrive as a prepared and competent individual. Due to any number of factors, correct or not, people seem to identify a BN commander's spouse with certain skills and aptitudes.

Give yourself every chance to establish your credibility by thinking and planning ahead. Otherwise, you may face an uphill battle. People will be assessing you from the start. Show them your talents and strengths. Flexibility and consistency will be key factors in determining your role as a senior spouse.

It is important for your peace of mind to try to define how active a role you want to take as a senior spouse. It is hard to change course once you have engaged in activities in the BN. The Leadership section on page 25 of this chapter discusses this further.

LEAVING THE BATTALION (OR YOUR PARTICULAR UNIT/ORGANIZATION)

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The departure of a command couple is a major event in the life of the unit. It is the end of your chapter in the continuing story of the battalion and the beginning of another. This period encompasses strong emotions, much social activity, the meeting of final responsibilities, the expression of gratitude, and the difficult task of saying farewell. With forethought and an abiding concern for others, this can be a positive and special time for all.

HOW TO APPROACH IT

Consider giving at least as much effort and energy to leaving the battalion as you did to joining the unit and its people. In many regards, you may wish to invest even more of yourself.

Having now lived, worked, made friends, shared experiences, and been intertwined in the life of the battalion, you will undoubtedly have many ideas about how you want to leave. The following recommendations may be helpful:

- Decide, in advance, as a couple and as an individual how you will leave the battalion. Plan the activities you will host.
- As early as you can, and as deemed appropriate, establish contact with the incoming commander's spouse. Begin to coordinate with him/her to smooth her/his way into the unit.
- Discuss the change of command and reception with your spouse. Though both affairs are official military functions, offer your input.
- Lay the groundwork for moving if you will move or PCS (Permanent Change of Station).
- Watch for and prepare to handle heightened emotions.

- A heart-to-heart talk with a friend who has already been there will help you to anticipate your feelings and understand they are normal.
- Expect your military spouse (now a "former" commander) to have some difficulties in coping with the loss of "being in charge," and you may experience similar emotions.
- Contemplate your public and private thank yous.
- Determine how you're going to thank your volunteers and friends, both outside and within the BN.
- Ensure that a welcome (separate from the COC ceremony), traditionally planned by the XO's spouse, is being planned for the incoming Commander's spouse. (Quietly monitor the arrangements if necessary.)
- Delegate to another BN Headquarters spouse if there is no XO spouse so that this new commander's spouse welcome does not get forgotten.
- Complete your continuity book and/or After-Action Report (AAR).

When the incoming commander's spouse arrives:

- Personally and warmly welcome her/him.
- Offer your assistance with getting settled.
- Invite the new command team into your home for a casual, unofficial meeting.
- Brief him/her on specifics of the unit and provide him/her with any after action reports, notes, historical material, or details at your disposal.
- Check to make sure the incoming BN commander's spouse has no questions and understands the plans for the COC and reception and their role.
- It is thoughtful if you can arrange to meet with her/him before the actual start of the ceremony. A small welcome gift is nice at this point.

Following the Change of Command:

- Leave the field once the COC is finished. Goodbyes and discussions with those wishing you well should be held away from the field or ceremony location.
- Have plans for the rest of the COC day. Think about getting away.
- Understand the need to cut ties. Allow loyalties to begin to shift. Accept that the unit and you must move on.
- Don't attend the new commander's spouse's welcome. You have now left the unit and have to relay that message to all the unit spouses. You also ask the unit spouses just before you leave to give their support and loyalty to the new incoming commander's spouse.
- If staying in the area or joining your old unit's higher headquarters (for example, your military spouse goes to the BDE headquarters), be kind and keep your distance. This may be impossible in all instances, but generally, try not to interfere or impede the changes that should be taking place.
- Send thank you notes for any farewell gifts, dinners, parties, get-togethers. If you received gifts, you may want to know who participated so that the appropriate people can be thanked.

- Talk about the command tour with your spouse and Family. Discuss the pros and cons, what you learned; how you fared in reaching your goals, what was a surprise, and what were never-to-be-forgotten moments.

HELPFUL HINTS

Think about what you have learned and gained as a person from the command experience. Feel good about yourself and take pride in your contributions. It may literally be years before others truly understand or appreciate what you did for them or gave to the unit. Personally feel satisfied and happy about your efforts.

When talking with your successor, honestly share both the ups and downs of your command experience, remembering to be professional and respectful in deciding what to share. You can be honest without relaying negative opinions.

Don't feel guilty if you're glad the command tour is over. There are lots of valid reasons why you could be ready to move on. There are probably as many reactions to leaving as there are people involved. Don't be drawn into comparisons with others.

Avoid making promises that you can't keep. If you say you'll write, follow through. Explain you'd rather not discuss unit business once you've left, and don't initiate contact with BN spouses still in the unit.

FRUSTRATIONS

You may just be getting the hang of your role, and it's time to call it quits. You may feel frustrated and/or sad that the role is coming to an end; this is normal.

You may find that the spouses and people in the battalion show more emotion, interest, and friendship toward you at the end of your tour than at any other point. Accept their attention and special kindnesses with gratitude and grace.

Try not to be perturbed when the new commander's spouse does not follow in your footsteps; change is good.

IMPLICATIONS

How you handle leaving the battalion sets the example. Some BN spouses will be going through the experience of a BN COC for the first time and not know what to expect. Others will know or realize that they can look to you for their cues.

If you organize in advance for your departure, you should have time for "special touches." You will be glad you aren't rushed beyond belief and have the chance to show people how much they mean to you. Particularly at this point, everyone appreciates your gratitude and individual attention.

If you choose not to brief your successor and do whatever possible to ease the transition, there probably will be a considerable cost to both her/him and the unit. This incoming commander's spouse will be forced to work in a vacuum and may suffer the consequences of poor communication.

Moving on can be a time of excitement. Look back with a sense of accomplishment, knowing you've helped others and grown as a person.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BRIEFING THE INCOMING COMMANDER'S SPOUSE

One of the most significant final contributions you will make to the unit is the information you pass on to your successor. You can play a critical role in assisting EVERYONE by paving the way for a smooth transition.

One way this can be accomplished is by familiarizing the incoming commander's spouse with virtually all aspects of unit and community life. Try not to overlook or underestimate this important aspect of leaving the BN. The final decision, of course, regarding what and how much information to share is yours.

Possible subjects to discuss or items to make available are:

- Offer to give her/him any after action reports, notes, historical materials, sample newsletters, meeting minutes, rosters, important names, addresses/phone numbers, or other written miscellaneous information which might be of help in a notebook/continuity book.
- Cue her/him on responsibilities or commitments she/he should be aware of immediately and give her/him time to think about what commitments she/he wants to accept
- Let her/him know about your experience when coming in new to the battalion.
- Discuss the units' Family readiness program. (FRG and deployment, including FRG funds)
- If there has been trauma or crisis in the unit, explain fully.
- Discuss social activities during the command period; this could include what you and/or your spouse have arranged, spouses' gatherings, unit functions, and any outside obligations (community, higher headquarters, post).
- Tell her/him how you have interacted with the CSM's spouse and other NCO/enlisted spouses.
- Explain your relationship and how you worked with anyone from higher headquarters or sister battalions.
- Inform her/him of major rules or regulations she/he may find worthwhile.
- Be open about frustrations you faced and how you overcame them.
- Discuss coffee group structure (just BN level or also Company level).
- Advise her/him on communication networks within the unit--how information is dispensed, publicity handled; possible means of establishing contact between her/him and others.

- If asked, have recommendations on what you might suggest phasing out or definitely continuing. Give reasons.
- Give her/him background on the unit's participation in past and popular events.
- Indicate any special projects you took on. Explain why.
- Specify resources available within the unit, community, and Army-wide.
- Make her/him aware of key people who have supported you and the unit.
- Speak with her/him about any particular personal policies you and/or your spouse had in place (responding to RSVPs, dress, how you asked to be addressed, attendance, etc.).
- Be straightforward, if there is interest, about your individual goals or leadership philosophy.
- Ask for her/his questions. Show a willingness to honestly and frankly respond to her/him. Allow time, if possible, for a follow-up meeting.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INCOMING COMMANDER'S SPOUSES CONTINUITY BOOK OR AFTER-ACTION REPORT (AAR)

- ☐ BN spouses' rosters – social, FRG, coffee groups, etc.
- ☐ BN FRG contacts and/or Chain of Concern chart including the CSM's spouse position and contact with 1SGT's spouses or representatives
- ☐ Battalion Handbook
- ☐ Info on:
 - a. BN FRG/deployments (including the new operating materials)
 - b. BN ceremonies
 - c. BN coffees
 - d. BN welcomes
 - e. BN farewells
 - f. BN gifts
 - g. BN obligations that pertain to the particulars of the present military community, such as community bazaars, formals, etc.
- ☐ Info for new company/battery FRG spouse leaders
- ☐ After-action reports such as:
 - a. Bake sales
 - b. BN level parties (Christmas, Easter etc.)
 - c. BN Formals (spouses' role)
 - d. Unit deployment activities/trainings
 - e. Single Soldiers' Christmas dinner or similar activities
 - f. Christmas stockings for Soldiers in barracks
 - g. Newsletter info
- ☐ Brigade, Division, BSB, ASG information, and Garrison/Installation events
- ☐ List of supplies belonging to the BN FRG and where items are stored
- ☐ Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) from all BN FRG committees such as
 - a. "Meals on wheels"
 - b. Treasurer's report

After-Action Reports (AARs)

Writing an AAR is very helpful. Here are questions to consider when you are responsible for writing a report.

1. Why are you writing the after action report?

- The AAR serves as an historical record of the operation, event, or position.
- The AAR lays the foundation for future planning.
- The AAR may be the only resource for your successor.
- The AAR provides planning details, lessons learned, and recommendations.

2. Who is the audience?

- Committee chair, committee members, or those who require information about an operation, event or position.
- Knowing your audience helps you to determine how formal the report needs to be.
- Do not assume your audience has a basic understanding of the operation, event, or position.

3. What should the AAR include?

- Enough detail to serve as a blueprint for successive events, operations, or positions.
- Minute details should be included as appendixes.
- Recommendations
- Accomplishments
- Costs

4. When do you prepare the AAR?

- Write the AAR during the course of the event, operation, or position; do not wait until it is over.
- Make sure the AAR is completed by the time you leave the position.

5. How do you prepare the AAR?

- Follow examples from previous years.
- Include enough information for the reader to understand what happened and why.
- Prepare a paper copy and CD.

GIFTS

The military culture and military spouses are known for the many small gift and memento presentations that have become a common practice. The reexamination and additions to the Department of Defense Joint Ethics Regulations, DOD 5500, 7-R (1993, Chapter 2, Section 300, includes gift regulations) and the newer Personal Affairs, Army Community Service Center Regulation (AR 608-1, Appendix J, 2007) clarify the giving and receiving of gifts regarding official business, and give better guidance for unofficial practices that have become traditional among spouses.

As a Commander's spouse, you follow the gift regulations your military spouse does regarding gifts given at official events, and the same is recommended for a Senior Leader Spouse not married to the Commander.

The discussion below pertains to matters from leadership, legal matters (See Chapter 4) and protocol (See Chapter 5) and is included for you to see the connections. Hopefully suggestions are provided which may be helpful. When coming into a unit, such as the BN level or higher, it is useful to take a moment and think ahead about all the categories and occasions for gift giving that might arise. Giving gifts is always left to the discretion of the giver, and there is much to consider when in a leadership position. What would you like to do personally, and what should be the guidance you give to other groups you interact with, as a senior spouse? (Always consult the Ethics Counselor JAG (Judge Advocate General) when you are not sure.) These suggestions have a traditional, garrison-located unit in mind. Those with very dispersed or unusually configured units may not find all below applicable.

PERSONAL GIFT CONSIDERATIONS--YOU PAY

There are many occasions to mark events, show support, and thank individuals, both officially and unofficially, for spouses and/or other unit members, because your sphere of people is much larger now. Below are categories that often arise. Some are usually left to group-given gifts, or no gift, and/or you do not need to additionally give your own personal gift. Categories are mentioned for your consideration. If you do decide to give a small gift anytime, it is important to be consistent, and have the same item or type of item for those within each group, to avoid the perception of favoritism of certain individuals.

You can also communicate your intentions regarding personal gifts, so some in one group do not feel left out because you have decided to limit yourself to only another. Keep in mind that gift giving does not have to be expensive, and thinking it through can help keep it from getting expensive for you. Sometimes a loaf of bread, a meal, cookies, or a hand-written note may be just as appreciated. Inviting a group of spouses over to your home (separate from entertaining you do with the Commander) is another fairly inexpensive way to say thanks. And again, you do not have to give any personal gifts at all, and still be a positive, supportive, and unifying leader.

YOUR WELCOME GIFTS--Decide how far down through the BN you would like to personally give a small welcome gift to other incoming spouses. Newly arrived, unmarried, unit members in some leadership positions, could also be considered.

- BN Command Group--you could decide to give a welcome gift to senior spouses of those working closely with the Commander, or to those position holders if they are unmarried, i.e., spouses of/or the CSM, EX-O, or deputy positions.
- BN Command Group Office--There sometimes are secretaries, government civilians, or others working with the Command Group. Sometimes the main office staff of the Commander likes to acknowledge birthdays, weddings, or new babies among their small group, and include the Commander's spouse. Let your Commander's main secretary/administrator know if you want to participate and how, with the 'inner office.'
- BN Headquarters (HDQTRS) Staff Group--This would include spouses of/or the unmarried Staff Leaders, i.e., the S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4. Note:, The S-1 or his/her assistant (familiar with personnel for the BN), and the unit JAG are people you may meet with, and talk to more than other Staff members, because of questions you may have regarding incoming families and spouse groups.
- BN HDQTRS FRG--This would encompass all members of the HDQTRS Staff and families, and the giving of welcome mementos within this FRG would follow the same 'policy' of the other BN FRGs. This is your family's designated FRG, (even though you might also be interacting with other FRGs in the unit as a leader spouse) and thus you would not personally give a gift, because you are an FRG member like the rest.
- BN FRG STEERING COMMITTEE, COMPANY COMMANDERS' SPOUSES, OTHER FRG LEADERS/REPS from Company/Battery/Troop level. Members of the latter two categories are often part of the first. You might want to personally give a welcome gift to these unit spouse leaders with whom you could be working closely throughout your time with the unit.
- BN SPOUSES' COFFEE GROUP--You could pay personally for small gifts and welcome new members to a monthly coffee group meeting. This has developed because Coffee Groups do not generate funds. Your decision about this depends on whether you assume leadership of this group (as is often expected and done), whether the group wants to pay for this function instead of you, and what the membership criteria is. (Just Officer's Spouses and CSM spouse, all Officer and NCO spouses, many civilian spouses, etc. The unit Coffee Group roster usually follows the BN social roster, which is not the same as the BN FRG rosters. FRG rosters are for all spouses, family members of each FRG; the social roster is for the BN unit leaders and spouses.)

WEDDINGS, NEW BABIES, RETIREMENTS, OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS, SIGNIFICANT EVENTS--

Personal gift giving for weddings follows normal courtesy; if you receive an invitation to the wedding, you send or bring a gift if you attend. Commanders sometimes receive many wedding invitations from Soldiers, or others in the unit. If not attending the wedding, a similar, or even same, small memento can be sent for each newly married couple, instead of individualized wedding gifts. Personally sent baby gifts depend on how far down through the unit you want to go, and then be consistent with whatever grouping you limit yourself to. Wedding, baby gift occasions are not as often as welcomes and farewells. Other announcements or invitations sent to you follow custom, such as some form of acknowledgement from you, whether it is a small gift or short note, for Graduations, Retirements, and Special Event Invitations.

Sometimes the Soldiers give small wedding gifts or baby cups to those amongst their group, and since the Commander participated with a group gift from this fund, you do not duplicate with another gift if you are a Commander's spouse. This fund is separate from the informal fund of the BN FRG, and these presentations are at the BN hail and farewell. Cup and flower funds can also be at the company level.

OTHER SPOUSES, UNIT MEMBERS--It is too difficult to personally give a small welcome gift to the other spouses in the BN, and generally difficult to do so for special events, and be consistent. Sometimes a BN Commander sends a welcome letter to each Soldier and your name is included. Your consideration of other spouses beyond the above-mentioned groups also depends on the size of your BN-level unit. You will need to be very thorough and give much time if you want to send personal welcome notes to all new spouses. You can encourage Company Commander's Spouses and Company-level FRG Leaders to define their own small gift giving 'policy', and encourage those spouses to look after the Junior Enlisted spouses in their groups. You hopefully can meet the majority of the BN junior spouses by attending (if invited) various FRG meetings.

PERSONAL COMMANDER'S LETTER--Many times Commanders send out a short, personal note with congratulations for Weddings, New Babies, Anniversaries, Awards given from outside the unit, or other events. If you are the spouse, you are usually included in sending the congratulations, ("Pam and I, etc. - signed Commander") and are thus covered for having acknowledged, and responded, and do not send an extra note or gift. Check with the Commander how this letter is phrased.

HOSTESS/HOST GIFTS--It is customary to bring a personal, small gift to the hostess/host of a dinner or party you are invited to, or a unit coffee you attend, because this event was privately paid for. You do not bring a gift to the leader listed as hosting official receptions, or formals, as these events are paid (or are partly paid) for with official funds. (You pay your own way to all formals.) Some Commander's spouses decide to give the same or similar hostess gift for their entire time with the unit and stock up on one item, and thus get known for always giving the same little basket, pin, note card pack, etc.

GIFTS FOR VOLUNTEERS--You can personally send a thank-you gift or note to a volunteer for exceptional work, but need to be aware of what is also being done by the group the Volunteer is associated with, and how the garrison recognizes Volunteers. You should try to thank the Volunteer without creating a perception of favoritism; however you want to acknowledge outstanding effort. (See Chapter 9, Volunteers). As mentioned above, you can have a group of Volunteers to your home to thank the group.

PERSONAL GIFT CONSIDERATIONS - ACCEPTING GIFTS – FAREWELL GIFTS

DOD Joint Ethics Regulations cover the monetary value allowed when accepting gifts in an official capacity. There are many details and extenuating circumstances when examining gift situations, and the designated ethics counselor JAG for your unit, is your clarification source.

Four examples are presented below to give a little understanding, and there could still be circumstances that determine the general rule differently.

- If at a special ceremony or official event, you receive a gift from a source outside the unit (either a company or individual, and there are no subordinates of the Commander in that source), there is a \$100.00 limit to what you and your husband/wife's Commander receive.
- If a group or groups within the unit want to give you a farewell gift, there is a \$300.00 limit total (aggregate all the gifts, including those to the Commander, if more than one).
- If you give a gift in an official capacity, bought with official funds, for an official visitor, there is a \$20.00 limit, or \$50.00 aggregate annually.
- Voluntary donations collected for a group gift for you or the Commander must be limited to \$10.00 each donor.

When receiving a gift in an official capacity, it is best to check with the unit JAG after the presentation. You can always keep any gift; you just have to personally pay the giver the difference if it is valued over the allowed amount, and you might not want to do that if it is expensive. Or you return the gift, or you donate it to the government. As you rise to greater and wider levels of spouse senior leadership, you must check with your unit JAG more regarding the giving and receiving of gifts in an official capacity. Judgment is needed when personally accepting gifts from individual friends while you are a Commander's spouse, especially when the giver is related in any way to your unit. Small hostess gifts for you, when you are entertaining in your home, are fine. Other cultures also have different expectations regarding gifts. When living in a foreign country and attending or hosting events with foreign nationals, check for guidance with your unit JAG or counsel. The value amounts regarding foreign dignitary gifts are often different. The line between what you are doing in an official capacity and what is considered a personal decision can be blurred and misperceived by others.

UNIT GROUPS AND GIFT CONSIDERATIONS--GROUP PAYS, (USUALLY) NO OFFICIAL FUNDS USED

Welcome, Wedding, and Baby Gifts can also be presented by groups. Farewell gifts are usually privately paid for. The important point is that funds for these gifts are generated within the membership and are applied equally to all members or benefit all members, and if the gift category or occasion is approved by the group

WELCOME GIFTS

FROM UNIT COFFEE GROUP--Small welcome gifts can be given by the Coffee Group if the group wants to and/or the Commander's Spouse does not want to be responsible for a small gift. Coffee Groups do not collect dues, do not have fundraisers, do not have a bank account, and are not considered informal funds, as the coffee group is not an official group. Funds are made through 'opportunities' at meetings. The hostess donates an item that members 'donate' a small amount of money towards, and one member is 'awarded' the item. The word 'raffle' is avoided, even as small as this activity is, as 'raffle' denotes gambling, and unit groups, even unofficial ones, must avoid any gambling activity.

The fund amount is kept by a designated, trusted individual, and is so small, that if lost, it is negligible, and coffee group members know this is an unofficial group.

FROM FRG--The Company/Battery/Troop level FRGs should have a plan for welcoming new members, and as the Commander's Spouse/Senior Leader Spouse, encourage them to make one, (without directly interfering) as part of your leadership work with the BN STEERING COMMITTEE. If an FRG wants to, small welcome gifts can be paid for from the FRG informal fund. Familiarize yourself with the rules regarding FRG informal funds (2007, AR 608-1, Appendix J, Section 7). The money for this fund comes from the FRG members and small 'opportunity' type activities. Use the word 'fundraising' carefully when talking about FRGs and informal funds. Social activity and items for such are paid for from the informal fund, and official business activity and items, from the unit APF (Appropriated Funds), in other words, government money. Welcome gifts are considered part of social activity. Also consult the unit JAG regarding all donations to the FRG, if, for example, someone wanted to donate or pay for all the welcome pins. FRGs have tighter guidance now regarding donations.

Here are a few gift suggestions you may find helpful; always check with the outgoing Commander's spouse as there may already be a system in place for the Coffee Group and/or FRGs.

- Unit pin
- Plant with the unit crest painted on the pot
- Homemade bread, cookies, or other goodies
- Special Unit Poem

- Unit magnets
- Ornaments with unit crest, etc.
- Wooden magnet picture frame with unit name/crest

BABY/WEDDING GIFTS

FROM THE UNIT COFFEE GROUP--Check with the group to see what the group desires, and express what you see fitting. You might have to take the lead on this decision and use judgment. These gift occasions can be very positive for group cohesion and demonstrate support, or turn slightly divisive, depending on how the 'policy' is determined and handled. These gifts can be presented as; one large gift from the group for a group member, bought with collected donations of a reasonable amount, voluntarily given by group members, or a collection of items donated by group members. Some-times this 'basket' method is preferred, so members do not have to give monetary donations each time. A 'basket' is put in the corner, and an announcement of the new bride/ (recently married male spouse!) or mom within the group, is included beforehand in the meeting's invitation. Members bring an appropriate item to put in the basket and can choose if they want to participate in each gift giving opportunity. This takes pressure off of the members feeling "obligated" to contribute and relieves the worry about "keeping up" with everyone else. Names on the gifts may be optional, so the new mother/bride does not have to worry about writing individual thank-you notes during this busy time.

Giving gifts at the meeting a month before the due date may be helpful in case the baby arrives early. Even though such gifts are presented at the meeting, the meeting is not called a baby or wedding shower. Baby or wedding showers are separate events privately held with separate guest lists. Members do not have to bring gifts to the meeting if they already went/or are going to a shower for the designated individual. Likewise, if you know every coffee group member was invited to that individual's shower, you do not have to do a gift occasion for the meeting.

FROM THE FRG--Small wedding/baby gifts can be given within FRGs. These will be paid for from the FRG informal fund. It will be up to the FRG members if they want to mark these occasions with small-group gifts. Some FRGs just include information and small write-ups regarding individual member's births or new marriages in the FRG newsletter, as that newsletter is paid for by the FRG informal fund if more than 20% of the space is used for such 'social' news, (as opposed to only family readiness information and official business). They feel that enough of the informal fund is used for the newsletter for these social announcements, and small gifts are not needed. Others want to give a small gift from the FRG. Encourage FRGs to decide how they want to handle this, and to let the members know what that FRG's individual 'policy' is. FRG gifts are not to be confused with any gift that might come from a cup and flower fund.

Some BNs have raised funds at the BN level FRG for newborn T-shirts and given them at the hospital to all newborns of parents in the unit, or handed them out at the lower level FRGs. Likewise for some BDEs in the past. A few Divisions in the past set up

separate private non-profit organizations to just raise funds for newborn layettes or gifts. This can be a big project, and while it is a very nice custom, it will take your attention if you come to a BN where such a practice is established. Some of the large-scale, newborn gift projects have diminished with the advent of FRGs, and allowing FRGs decide how to do this on a smaller scale.

Baby gift suggestions are:

- One gift from the group such as a gift card for the PX, department store, etc.
- Christening cap made from a handkerchief
- Engraved baby cup
- Small t-shirt with unit name on it
- Cross-stitched baby bib with crest
- Special unit 'birth certificates' or humorous, official-looking certificates
- Silver spoon or charm
- Soft stuffed animal
- "Child of a Soldier" poem

FAREWELL GIFTS

FROM THE UNIT COFFEE GROUP--Members pay for their own farewell gifts. It is the best practice, as there was confusion in the past regarding coffee group fundraising, fairness, and a select group (rank association) benefiting. All members do not have to have a farewell gift when they leave the group. If they want one, they pay, and plan on receiving it at their last meeting.

You, the Commander's Spouse and/or Coffee Group leader, can provide a few choices and then the members choose which item. You ask the group for suggestions and narrow them down to a few, or even one, if all can agree. You may want to be in charge of ordering this/these gift(s), or work closely with volunteer, as individual dates for leaving the unit needs to be tracked.

FROM THE FRG--Unit Soldier's Farewell gifts can be given from unit, and bought with unit (APF) funds because of the Soldier's official business work and contribution to family readiness, separate from his membership in the FRG. Therefore FRGs should avoid giving farewell gifts to Soldiers. FRG Spouses' farewell gifts have to be bought from the FRG informal funds, as these fall into the social activity category. Farewell gifts from FRGs can be tricky, and the exact procedure should be cleared with the unit JAG. It is complicated to try to have a farewell gift policy for FRGs if the members do not want to pay for their individual gifts, and even then, it can be difficult because of the informal fund rules. Check what the farewell 'policy' is for each FRG, and make sure it is in line with the new FRG regulations.

Farewell gift suggestions:

- "Coffee Table" book with pictures of the area signed by group members.

- Recipe box with recipes from each member of the group.
- Print of local landmark (framed or unframed); group members sign the back.
- Bracelet with unit crest.
- Apron with embroidered crest and/or name of spouse.
- Napkin ring with unit crest.
- Ornaments with the BN crest or unit frame.
- Stained glass item.
- Glasses with crest on them.
- Wooden or glass serving tray, bowls, etc., engraved with unit crest.
- Lace table runner embroidered with unit/brigade/division/corps crest on each end.
- Framed "Spouse of a Soldier" poem signed by members on the back.
- Cross-stitched unit crest on a quilt square.

FAREWELL GIFT FOR AN OUTGOING COMMANDER'S SPOUSE--This gift is given to the BN Commander's Spouse when the unit changes Commanders. Such a gift could also be given to a Senior Spouse Leader who has served the unit at that level for the Commander. This gift could be one gift from all the spouses in the BN who volunteer to participate, and coordinated by the BN FRG STEERING COMMITTEE through the Company/Battery/Troop level FRGs. It has to be carefully communicated as having voluntary participation, with, usually, individual donations of \$10.00 or under (guidance to follow the same rule for DOD employees, military). Clarify with the unit JAG if this gift is going to be BN-wide and the procedure. This gift could also be given from the BN Coffee Group and handled unofficially. The Coffee Group could include participation, donations, from spouses outside the coffee group, (still within the BN), and this participation that does not structurally include the BN FRGs would be clarified. BN FRGs and the BN Steering Committees can present small gifts on their own. Have the gift committee for this particular gift be mindful of the DOD gift regulations, including the \$300.00 aggregate limit, and the avoidance of solicitation, especially from those in an associated subordinate position, (even though you nor they are DOD employees or in the military).

Even though the Coffee Group is unofficial, 'unofficial' clarification from the unit JAG is best when organizing this gift presentation.

Outgoing Commander's Spouse Suggestions:

- Quilt made from cross-stitched squares depicting scenes/events from this spouse's time associated with the unit.
- Plate chargers (engraved with the unit crest).
- A Print (framed or unframed) signed on the back by the spouses.
- Recipe box with recipes from the unit spouses.
- Stained glass item with unit crest or memento from the area.
- Crock or ginger jar from the area.
- Crystal vase, bowl, or plate, etc. engraved with the BN crest.

- Items unique to the area (tobacco jar from NC, crystal from Germany, etc.).
- Cross-stitched anything--napkins with crests, tablecloth with company or BN crests in the corners, bell pull with unit crest, etc.

LEADERSHIP

The Many Elements of the Senior Spouse Role

As a Senior Spouse you choose your role, and it is a role, not a job. This may seem like a subtle difference, but it is important to remember. A senior spouse has a role. What does that mean and what *do* senior spouses do?

Army officers serve on a staff or are commanders at increasing levels throughout their career. As an officer moves from battalion or squadron level (a lieutenant colonel/O-5) to the brigade or regimental level (a colonel/O-6), a role change takes place for his or her spouse, particularly for the spouse of a commander. This change is even more pronounced for the spouses of General Officers, and is a factor in varying degrees to spouses of senior staff officers. At the battalion or squadron level everything is hands on and done through personal participation. Those spouses who choose to participate are frequently involved in the units, the Family Readiness Groups, the fundraising, support and social activities, the welcome and farewell events - all on a personal and usually face-to-face level. This participation is focused toward the unit, supporting the unit's Soldiers and their families.

At the brigade or O-6 level, the emphasis shifts from inward on the unit to more outward, towards the community, which is an expanded role for the senior spouse. Your efforts and support are directed towards the good of the greater community, not just 'your' unit or group. For many individuals this can be unsettling because it is a new experience. The role difference between spouses at the battalion level and spouses at the brigade level and above is much like the difference between parents and grandparents. Parents do all the hard work on a daily basis, while grandparents provide heartfelt support all the time and lend a helping hand when asked.

With this shift in emphasis outward, comes a wider perspective and increased influence. Because you are married to a senior officer, you are sometimes perceived to have some advantage, or power by association, however the word 'power' is not accurate. Its use should be avoided to prevent misperceptions. In a democratic society, legitimate power comes from the people to someone in an elected or subordinate appointed position. For example, legitimate power comes from the American people through their elected representatives' civilian control of the military and extends down to the Soldier. No legitimate power extends to you, the spouse. Instead, you have intangible influence. It is initially granted to you because of your position, i.e., who you are married to. You can increase or lose that influence depending on your actions, by how you behave and act in your role. The words "position" and "role" are used interchangeably. Sometimes it is useful to think of the first as defining place and the second explaining action to help you assess yourself. If you are perceived to behave selfishly or rudely, you will lose

your influence. People will avoid you. If you do anything illegal, you, of course, lose your credibility and your trouble extends to your military spouse. If you create conflict through your military spouse, you might have negative influence for awhile, but you will eventually become ineffective, and people will find a way to work around you. If you choose not to engage at all, you lose the influence that was first available to you as a new senior spouse.

If you engage people in a positive way, you can increase your influence, sometimes purposefully, and other times without even realizing it. Your influence can be negative or positive, lost or developed, depending on how well you practice leadership skills. Much of your influence will come from people seeing and sensing how much you care. They will form an opinion of this based on your communication skills and demonstrated compassion. In the end, while people are respectful of your place, or the position, nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.

And why should you care about this thing called influence? You care because you are married to an officer or NCO who has chosen to serve his or her country as a profession. That profession is about the defense of the nation. Defense of the nation concerns Soldiers. Officially, taking care of Soldiers and their families concerns your spouse. Unofficially, caring for Soldiers and supporting and helping their families concerns you because of this life you lead. You have to be careful not to exert “undue influence.” For example, the Army has clarified this with the revision of the regulation regarding private organizations (DA 210-22). While this example pertains mostly to spouses of commanders, it is beneficial for all senior spouses to be aware of. Many of the old constitutions of spouse connected organizations that operated on a garrison, stated that the spouse of the most senior, or installation commanding officer not only served in an honorary position, but also appointed people to certain positions, such as the advisor or nominating committee members. The word ‘appoint’ means the granting of authority. A private organization is democratic and the power rests with the group membership and their representative board. The senior spouse is a volunteer, like everyone else. She or he is asked by the board to serve in any additional position other than the honorary president, and she or he voluntarily accepts. The senior spouse cannot do any official appointing because the group has the power. The Army has removed the chance for ‘undue influence’ as the senior spouse participates and helps the organization.

The role of a senior spouse extends outwards and involves relationships and layers. How far does your influence or possibility for influencing extend? Its extent is up to you. One way to look at the expanding relationships regarding the Army and you, the senior spouse, is shown below. Each element of this role, with the exception of the first, is your choice to assume or not.

1. Personal. The first relationship is to your military spouse and does not involve the unit. How much of a role does he or she perceive for you? How do you perceive the role? You can acknowledge the existence of the senior spouse position and not do anything further. Your only connection to the military is as a military Family member;

you communicate with your spouse in your personal marriage, and maintain your private life. This layer includes your relations with your Family, extended Family, and personal participation in non-Army entities.

2. Ceremonial. The second relationship is between you and the unit, and you and the unit command group. This second relationship involves accepting the ceremonial aspect of the senior spouse role. You publicly appear with your spouse at ceremonies and military events, agree to publicly support your spouse while he or she serves in an official position, and can even represent your spouse at events. The Army aspect of your relationship with your spouse involves not only your private lives, but your public acceptance of the connection you have to his or her military job, such as that of a commander or department head.

Your connection with the military members of the unit is mostly representational; you communicate with the command team regarding official business.

3. Hostess. The next relationship extends to both military and Family Members of the unit, and helpful individuals outside the unit. By being a hostess, both in and outside your home, the senior spouse role directly affects others, and you can enhance morale by communicating positively and more personally with the unit. You begin to know each other as individuals. By agreeing to entertain, you provide for further bonding between all members of the unit. You also enhance the unit by entertaining or hosting others from outside the unit that support the unit or are beneficial in an approved manner.

4. Coffee group leader. This relationship is between you and command group spouses and some other unit spouses. Commander spouses often lead an informal coffee group. This group is strictly social and for mutual support. It usually does not include all the spouses of the unit. A commander's spouse decides whether or not to have this group. It can form and disband, and reform. The commander's spouse does not have to host it, but leads it, or asks someone else (Remember you can't appoint!) to volunteer to lead it, if the spouses in the unit want to have a coffee group.

5. Family Readiness Group. This relationship is between you and all Family Members of the unit, and others outside the unit who want to support Soldiers in the unit. The senior spouse is involved with this unit organization according to the commander's wishes, because the commander appoints the FRG leader, or steering committee chairperson. You can accept voluntarily. There are different forms of FRG leadership. The commander's spouse does not always have to be the FRG leader or steering committee chairperson. Your influence and the relationship can vary; however, in more cases than not, you can have great influence by deciding to engage and work with this group.

6. Garrison Organizations. This relationship includes you and your military community. You might be involved with many private organizations and garrison agencies that offer support to you, to members of your unit, and make your immediate community better. As a senior spouse you are often encouraged to participate, and you have more influence on a community scale, if you participate and know what these groups are doing. See the Resources, IMA and Garrison organizations chapter.

7. Outside Garrison. This is the relationship between you and your civilian community. You are often regarded as a community leader beyond the garrison. Garrisons interact with their surrounding community, and senior spouses are sometimes a liaison or connecting influence with many supportive organizations off post, sometimes in a private capacity, and sometimes as a garrison representative.

8. Other Army Garrisons. This relationship is between you and other senior spouses, in your region, and Army wide. As a senior spouse you communicate with other senior spouses at conferences and can work voluntarily on Family issues in your region, as well as Army wide. You develop relationships, and become influential among your peers on a broader scale.

As you can see, you may feel like the center of an onion, or a stone dropped in water with expanding rings. Your role can encompass many layers, or you can decide to participate in only a few relationship layers. You can spend time with as many or as few of these groups as you choose, according to your spouse's current position, and how you and your military spouse see your role as a senior leader.

Most importantly, underlying all these relationships is your willingness to engage and care for people. No matter how many layers you extend to, an important part of being a senior spouse is that of being a mentor, adviser, or coach.

Merriam-Webster Online defines those roles as:

- Mentor---as a noun it means, friend entrusted with education; as a transitive verb, it means to serve in the role as a friend entrusted with education.
- Adviser---to give advice, to counsel; caution, warn; recommend; to give information, notice, inform.
- Coach---one who instructs or trains a performer or a team of performers; *specifically* : one who instructs players in the fundamentals; to instruct, direct, or prompt as a coach

Mentoring, Advising, and Coaching

The roles of mentor, advisor, and coach have similarities; in some cases there is an overlap of the roles. Each is a leader assisting others in achieving goals, who develops personal relationships with the people with whom they work. Each has talents and skills that are respected and are role models. However, there are subtle differences:

- A mentor is usually someone another person respects, admires, and feels a personal connection to. The mentor has a skill or talent that the other person is trying to learn or improve. A mentor takes that person under her/his wing after being asked and develops and empowers them to accept responsibility and succeed on their own. The mentor thinks and speaks with the welfare of 'you' (singular), the person being mentored, in mind.

TIP: A senior spouse can seek out others to help her/him learn new skills or roles. While many think of senior spouses in mentor roles, we are all learning and growing and senior spouses can also be mentored! Even an experienced senior spouse may be asked to participate in something new to her/him or in an agency, organization, or group for the first time. If you are entering a role that is new to you, ask someone to be your mentor.

- An advisor is an appointed position. A person has to be asked to fill an advisory position and that person has to agree to fulfill the role. The person asked to be an advisor usually has some knowledge, experience, resources or skills that are needed by the individual or group she/he advises.
- Advisors listen more than they talk but should never be afraid to speak if the group's actions are in conflict with the group's charter, purpose, goals; are treading in dangerous, illegal, or unethical territory; or if they hit an impasse or do not know where to get outside assistance on a particular issue. Advisors are the quiet guide, the voice of reason, experience and wisdom. An advisor thinks and speaks with 'you' (plural) the group, in mind.

TIP: The Advisor position is not necessarily the same as the *Honorary Advisor* position. Organizations may have one or both (Advisor and/or Honorary Advisor). These roles may be performed by one individual but often by two different individuals. The information here is written about the Advisor position. Honorary positions, (such as Honorary President or Honorary Advisor) generally are positions of honor. If you are in an honorary position, ask the organization what is expected of you.

- A coach is a knowledgeable or talented person who teaches specific skills to a group or individual. The coach actively demonstrates those skills and allows others to actively participate in order to gain the skills. The coach gives feedback. Two way dialogue and open communication are essential as the skills are refined and fine-tuned. Coaches take ownership in the transfer of the skill or talent to the group or individual until they can demonstrate successful understanding of the skill or talent. Patience and communication are key characteristics of a coach. A coach thinks and speaks with 'we' (the coach and the group or individual) in mind.

TIP: Check with your installation to see if skill or leadership training is available for your role as a coach, such as AFTB Level 3. Also, as a senior spouse, if you are asked to perform a task or skill for which you feel unprepared or need improvement, seek guidance from someone who has previously done this task. Coaches, too, may be coached!

Key Points to remember in the role of:

A Mentor

- ✓ is a friend entrusted to teach others
- ✓ teaches in an informal manner
- ✓ is in a two-way relationship
- ✓ is chosen by others to mentor them
- ✓ is a role determined by the needs of others
- ✓ is not the owner of the project or individual
- ✓ is concerned for the development of the project or individual
- ✓ looks for challenges to encourage growth and potential
- ✓ is a role model, so be positive
- ✓ is genuine
- ✓ is able to say “I don’t know, let’s try to find out”
- ✓ is able to let others make their own decisions

An Adviser

- ✓ is usually an appointed position and agrees to fill that position
- ✓ is a resource for the group
- ✓ is knowledgeable about outside resources that are useful to the group
- ✓ is knowledgeable of the parliamentary procedures for the group
- ✓ is a positive presence
- ✓ is able to listen
- ✓ is able to guide and does not direct. You are not the leader
- ✓ is not the ‘do’ person for the group/project; but is willing to lend a hand if asked
- ✓ is aware of what her/his role is and knows what the limits are
- ✓ is not afraid to say, “I don’t know, let’s try to find out”
- ✓ is good at encouraging others
- ✓ is able to offer advice, and remembers it does not have to be taken
- ✓ insists on confidentiality – what is discussed in meetings and board rooms stays in meetings and board rooms among the members present and is never taken to the “streets” or discussed behind other’s backs. Unresolved issues need to be openly addressed either by being placed on the next agenda or handled off line between all involved parties.
- ✓ is able to keep her/his sense of humor
- ✓ is impartial and never take sides
- ✓ is adept at the practice of diplomacy
- ✓ is able to appropriately intervene if the group is considering action that will violate regulations or is not in the best interest of the group or what it represents
- ✓ is on top of the financial matters, keeps and reviews a copy of all financial reports

A Coach

- ✓ teaches others with less experience, knowledge and/or skills

- ✓ shares her/his experience and knowledge
- ✓ gives directions and clear instructions and then allow others to do it
- ✓ brushes up on communication skills
- ✓ is knowledgeable of the styles of situational leadership – directing, coaching, supporting and delegating
- ✓ is an active participant – can demonstrate what needs to be done, not just talk about it
- ✓ knows what steps needs to be done and has a plan
- ✓ is involved
- ✓ is part of the team
- ✓ takes ownership in the project
- ✓ helps others believe in their own skill
- ✓ helps build self esteem and confidence
- ✓ helps others become more independent and successful
- ✓ brings positive energy to the group
- ✓ is a good listener
- ✓ is able to say “I don’t know, let’s try to find out” or “I’m sorry”

The above explanations indicate a sense of compassion and caring, as well as the sharing of wisdom and experience with others. As a senior military spouse, you likely have experienced many of the same things that younger spouses will be confronted with. You can share your knowledge and experience to help them connect with others, grow into their role of a participating spouse, and serve families in their unit and the larger military community.

Unit and military community leaders need support. Effective senior spouses act as supporters and resources, not officially for the organizations, but unofficially for the leaders of those organizations, and thus help enable those leaders to successfully lead. Senior spouses can even ultimately enhance the effectiveness of an organization. Senior spouses provide sounding boards for leaders to explore options, learn new methods, share ideas, vent frustrations, and regroup. Successful senior spouses provide the environment for connecting leaders with each other, while resisting the urge to steer the debate or outcome of these leader’s decisions. These spouses can foster healthy, creative interactions that ultimately improve the particular organization.

Encouraging others is part of being a leader. Senior spouses encourage others to volunteer as willing and equal partners in a worthwhile endeavor that contributes to the greater good of an organization, unit, or community. You try to sustain those who volunteer, by thanking them, working beside them, (neither above nor below them), and giving them credit when credit is due. Treat others as you would like to be treated. Everyone has choices, and you cannot expect to fully understand another person and his/her situation, and likewise for that person. Individuals will make their own decisions regarding the participation level that suits their circumstances and must be supported in their choices. Individual leadership styles, personal preferences, and circumstances influence the choices for everyone, including you, a senior spouse. How you approach your role will differ from how another would. In today’s military Family, we have an

increasing number of dual military and career couples, blended Families, individuals with increasing responsibilities to elder parents, exceptional Family Members with special needs, and many other obligations. Traditional roles are being filled in nontraditional ways, often with great success.

The traditional norms and expectations of a senior spouse are generally based on a peacetime environment. The immediate and serious demands of war or conflict can change the set of responsibilities, individual needs, organizational procedures, and expectations of all. The role of a senior spouse becomes even more critical during war. Adaptability, experience, and flexibility allow the senior spouse to apply the same principles learned during peacetime towards these increased requirements of wartime. Senior spouses can make a vital difference. The key is to find the right balance of trying to meet needs and expectations with the right resources in an ever-changing environment.

Situational Leadership

One trait that effective leaders share is flexibility. While most of us are comfortable with one leadership style or another, it is important that you work to match your leadership style to the current situation and the group's membership. This flexibility in style will allow you to focus on the group's needs and goal accomplishment. At the start of a new task when goals are set, the leader should identify the commitment and abilities of the members to meet those goals. For example, are the groups members fully committed to the project, but need help with a particular skill; or are they capable of reaching the goal, but need motivation and support? By assessing the commitment and skill level, the leader can adjust his/her leadership style to meet the needs of the group and determine the most effective way to guide the group. Keep in mind that this assessment is an ongoing process; a new task or set of goals may change the needs of the group and thus, the appropriate leadership style for the situation. In addition, during a long-term project, members' needs and abilities may change over the duration of the task.

Most leadership philosophies recognize four basic styles of leadership: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. For senior spouses, most of the people you work with are volunteers. The coaching and supporting styles of leadership are **usually** most appropriate in those situations, while for simpler tasks a delegating style may be suitable. The directing style should rarely, if ever, be used when working with volunteers. All four styles are included here.

Directing: In this leadership style, the leader is very commanding. The leader tells the members what, how, when, and where to complete their tasks. The leader is the problem-solver, who analyzes and frames the problem, develops solutions, and dictates them to his subordinates for execution. The communication is mainly one-way, from the leader to the group members. This style works well when the group members are motivated, but lack the skills to accomplish the task or achieve the ultimate goal. It is also appropriate when time is extremely limited.

Coaching: In this style, the leader serves as a coach. The group members contribute ideas, and the leader provides direction. Communication is two-way because the group members contribute their ideas. This leadership style works well with members who are developing skills.

Supporting: In the supporting style of leadership, the leader is group oriented. The leader shifts to a supporting role, where he/she listens and facilitates decision-making of the followers. Communication is a two-way process; the leader periodically reviews the group's progress. This style works well with group members who have the ability to carry out tasks in order to reach the goal and are motivated.

Delegating: In this style the leader and the group members' work together to develop goals. Group members determine how the goals will be achieved. The group interaction is as important as the outcome. This style of leadership is effective when the members are capable, motivated, and confident in their abilities to carry out tasks and achieve the group's goals.

Everyone has a leadership style they are most comfortable with, but no single style is going to work well in every situation. Make sure to assess the needs of the group in a given situation, and consciously choose a leadership style that meets the needs of the members. Other things that can affect the choice of leadership style may include the amount of time given to complete the task, a crisis or high stress situation, or major change within the organization. These situations may call for a more directive style of leadership.

Wellness and Time Management

Leadership roles last years, not days or months, and good leaders seem to be rewarded with more and more responsibility. There is an old saying that goes, "If you want something done, ask the busiest person." It does seem that the busiest people get asked to do more and more. However, some people manage to get the job done and do it with a smile and a positive attitude. How do they do it? They take care of themselves, manage stress as best they can, are proactive instead of reactive, and are organized. As a senior spouse you will have many demands on your time and energy, but in order to maintain a healthy balance, you must work to take time for yourself.

You cannot give to others if you have nothing left to give; whether you are giving to your Family, a job, a volunteer position, or a role within the community, it is important to take care of yourself. Wellness is more than just your physical health; it includes your spiritual, intellectual, sociological, and psychological well-being. Begin by eating right, drinking plenty of water, and keeping up with regular medical care. Take time to exercise and ensure that you get enough sleep each night. In addition, set aside time for yourself and have some fun – do things you enjoy, that are just for you. Begin an enjoyable hobby or take a class. Keep in mind that these things will not happen if you do not schedule time to make them happen. Many times when life gets busy, the first

thing to drop off your agenda is the private 'me' time. Eventually, all of your hours are filled doing for others and you may be stressed – your mind, body and spirit are all demanding that enough is enough. You may feel that your life is out of control, and there is too much pressure. Before you know it, you are stressed!

Realistically there are only 24 hours in a day. The “to do lists” get longer and longer, and before we know it, we are multitasking. We all multitask to some degree; for example, making phone calls while eating, cooking, doing laundry, ironing, helping with homework, scrubbing counters or dishes, putting on our make up or shoes, while running out the door, or while driving. We give a task half of our attention for twice as long and do not remember any of the details of the conversation.

We cannot give full attention to everything all the time and in the end we may not be satisfied and can become overstressed, exhausted and burned out. Signs that you have reached this point may be a constant state of anger, fatigue, uncooperativeness, or aggressiveness. It is important to look for signs of burn out in yourself, your leaders, your Family, and your spouse. By being proactive and organized, you can manage stress and prevent burn out.

Be Proactive Suggestions:

- When you arrive at a new post, familiarize yourself with the layout and available services. Do not wait until you need them. This knowledge will help you direct others to information that can help them solve their own problems.
- Take 15-20 minutes at night or at the beginning of the day to plan out your time. You will be amazed at how organizing your time will give you a feeling of control. This control can relieve stress and head off burn out.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself. You cannot be all things to all people at all times. Make choices about what is most important and move on.
- We all have days when things do not go as planned. If you learn to let things go and move on, you will not waste time on what you should have or could have done.
- It is perfectly okay to say “No” or “Not this time” if a request is not realistic for you at a particular time. Remember, people expect a commitment with follow through when someone agrees to fulfill a request or an expectation. You do not do yourself, anyone else, or any organization a favor to say “yes” and then not deliver what you promise.
- Listen before you act or react. Hear what others have to say. Sometimes others just want to be heard and you do not have to do anything other than be supportive. Listening can sometimes tell you what is really going on and you can address small issues while they are still small.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help or to say you do not know. Be willing to help find answers and not just ignore issues.
- Plan ahead, particularly during the busiest times of the year such as change of command season, holidays, deployments and redeployments.

- Set reasonable priorities and limits and share them with those you work and live with. Of course, there must be some flexibility, but in general, people appreciate knowing what they can expect of you; they will respect you for it.
- Redirect those who may forget or push those priorities or limits. There is nothing wrong with saying, “I cannot meet (or talk) with you right now, let’s set a time when we can look at this.” This is especially true if you are unexpectedly approached in the community or at a social event.
- Learn to delegate responsibilities rather than trying to do everything yourself.
- Make a promise to yourself to set aside some time every week to do something just for you...not your Family...not your unit ...not your community. You should consider how many hours in a week you devote to others and how many hours you devote to your own wellness.

Be Organized:

- Know where your “tools” are; it will save you time and frustration.
- Carry important papers (rosters, calendars, maps, information sheets etc.) with you in your car or purse when you leave the house so they’re available when you need them.
- Have a system to keep the various aspects of your life organized –file folders, baskets, boxes, bags...anything that will work for you so you can manage your personal life, your volunteer life, your children’s lives, and all your important legal documents.
- Insert lists of key phone numbers, such as office, school, emergency contacts, neighbors, relatives in your agenda.
- Set aside certain hours of the day to return phone calls and respond to email. When you are on the phone, get to the point and minimize small talk; you can be pleasant and still get down to business quickly. Think about what you are going to say when you make a call and make notes to keep yourself on track.
- Being organized can help you to minimize the number and length of meetings needed. Only call a meeting when it is necessary and only involve those who truly need to be there.

Meeting Management:

When you are in a leadership position, you are often responsible for calling and facilitating meetings. Good meeting management skills can dramatically improve your effectiveness as a leader. No one likes to sit through a two-hour meeting that could have been finished in an hour. When a meeting is not efficiently run, people feel that their time is not valued. In order to have an effective meeting, a leader must prepare for the meeting, manage the meeting, and follow up with results.

- Always have a purpose for a meeting.
- Have an agenda.
- Set time limits for topics and stick to it.

- Make sure the people who need to be at the meeting are notified.
- Let those who will be asked for information at the meeting know in advance.
- Make sure that the meeting room set-up is conducive to the task.
- Begin on time.
- Keep the meeting moving.
- Keep the group on task.
- Keep written records of the discussion and the action decided upon.
- Assign tasks with deadlines.
- Set the next meeting date and time.
- After the meeting, reflect on the positives and negatives and adjust accordingly.
- Complete tasks as assigned and encourage others.
- Provide minutes to those in attendance and those who could not be there.
- Write an after-action report for major events.

Entertaining:

Entertaining can be another source of stress. There is so much to do and never enough time to do everything. If you keep in mind why you are having an event and plan accordingly, you can relieve some of the pressure you put upon yourself. Let your true self show through and entertain in a way that is comfortable for you; do not try to copy someone else's entertaining style. People come for the camaraderie, not to judge your food or your house. It is not a competition, so feel free to use store bought items, a caterer, take out, or have a potluck when necessary.

- Certain times of the year will be busier for everyone. This is particularly true during the holidays and during change of command season. You will receive many invitations and you may also entertain more than usual. You can fight burnout by having some balance in your life and having fun. Here are some tips to help during the busy entertaining season:
- It may be impossible to attend each and every event you are invited to.
- It may be possible to attend many events on the same day by "making an appearance;" i.e., attending for a short period of time as a courtesy visit. People understand senior leaders have busy schedules and appreciate you making the time to at least come by and say hello if you cannot come for the entire event. It is important when you RSVP to tell your hostess if you will be doing this so he/she can properly prepare the event, menus etc. Often a host will hold up serving, toasts, comments, etc. until the senior person has arrived, so be sure your intent is clear by saying something like, "I/we have several events we are attending this evening and probably will arrive at (this) time, but please do not wait on me/us to begin." Call if you have last minute emergencies.
- It is also possible to cover twice as much ground if you split shift with your spouse. You can link up together afterwards and make it to the school play, sports game, etc. for your child, all on the same night and still enjoy it.
- When entertaining in your home, give some thought to scheduling events several days in a row or with a day in between. While this may sound overwhelming, it

does have advantages. First, you only have to clean your house once! A light touch up and a reset may be needed in between. Second, you can buy and prepare in bulk. You can even use the same menu for all events to further simplify things.

- Another great idea is to share the work by become a catering team with several of your peers, neighbors, or friends who are also entertaining at the same busy time as you. Consider pooling the menu ideas and sharing the work. You may have to make one or two dishes in larger quantities to share with your friends, but they will be sharing with you in return. This method can save time and energy, while adding some variety and fun to your entertaining. Prepare and freeze items ahead of time.
- Back door friends truly are the best. During the hectic entertaining season, it can be fun, as well as save your sanity, to ask your friends to help you in the kitchen. By trading off duties with your neighbors or friends when you entertain, you are free to spend time with your guests. Meanwhile, your helpers can set up trays and keep the kitchen under control. Payback of course comes when they entertain and you reciprocate kitchen duty for them. Many feel the kitchen is the best place to be at a party anyway, so this will not seem like a chore.
- Consider having an “après-party.” So often when entertaining the host and hostess do not have time to really enjoy themselves. There also tends to be quite a bit of food left over. It is a relatively new but fun tradition to have an “after-party” party. Invite your peers and neighbors to join you once your unit guests have left. Put on some comfy clothing, sit down and relax. Usually by the time the après party is over, there are no leftovers to put away, and you have had time to unwind. In addition, your friends will probably pitch in for the last bit of clean up.
- If your military spouse is a commander, you must not show favoritism by inviting people from the unit. Instead invite friends and neighbors who are non-unit related.

At the end of a command tour or a commitment to a volunteer position, you want to be able to walk away feeling like you and your Family have been enriched by the experience, rather than on the brink of a Family disaster or divorce! We are all human, we all have strengths and weaknesses; it is not a failing to be less than perfect. However, having to pretend we are perfect, that we do not make mistakes, and can do all things for all people is unrealistic. Invest in yourself, your spouse, and your Family first and the rest will fall into place.

Recruiting Volunteer

Volunteer recruitment and management are key roles of senior spouses. A volunteer is anyone who commits their time without payment for doing so. It is always important to be mindful of their gift of time.

In order to effectively recruit volunteers for an organization, you must be committed to the organization’s goals and the position you are recruiting for. You should know the

qualities needed to perform the job, including the time commitment required, and can help the organization write a job description if there is not one available. Then you can brainstorm potential sources of volunteers to fit these requirements.

When you find someone that you think would be a good fit for a particular volunteer position, approach the person enthusiastically. Be specific and forthright about what is required, especially the time commitment. Share any known deadlines and tell them about any training that is available. Emphasize how they will benefit from an association with the organization. Ask about previous volunteer experience and their knowledge of the organization you are recruiting for. If they are not familiar with the organization, take the opportunity to educate them about it. Let the person know why you chose to approach them for a particular position. Provide for them to receive a copy of the job description and the contact information and guide the arrangements if you are following up.

Remember that your job does not end after you recruit volunteers. You must work to recognize their accomplishments, retain them in the volunteer ranks, and when necessary, redirect them to another volunteer activity. Thanking volunteers is as important as recruiting them. If you do not thank them sincerely, they will be less likely to volunteer next time, and in the end the community or unit suffers because the needed project or work will be hard to accomplish. (See the Volunteers chapter for more information.)

Accomplishing Goals

As a leader, one of your main functions will be to help the group accomplish tasks. It may be helpful to consider three main areas of focus. The first is deciding what you want to accomplish, or goal-setting. It is important to set realistic and measurable goals. While you want to be challenged, make sure that the goals are not so lofty that you cannot possibly succeed.

This will only serve to frustrate the group members and will not result in a satisfying conclusion for anyone involved. In addition, keep in mind that it will be much easier to determine if you met your goals, if they are measurable. For example, the Family Readiness Group might decide that one of its goals is to *do better job welcoming new spouses to the unit*. This is an admirable goal; however, how will the group determine if they have met the goal? By changing the goal to *visit or call every new spouse within a month of their arrival to the unit*, you have clearly defined your objective and given yourselves a measure that can be used to determine whether or not you have achieved your goal.

Secondly, you should develop a concept to achieve the goals you have set. By breaking tasks down into small pieces, it will be easier to see the steps needed and formulate a plan of action to accomplish them. If you are planning a volunteer recognition event, the group needs to decide what type of event you want to have, when and where will it be held, and who will design and send out the invitations. Will there be

food, gifts, entertainment, certificates, or a guest speaker? As you think through the process of putting on the volunteer event, these smaller pieces of the overall goal become obvious areas for committees or individuals to begin their planning.

Finally, you need identify the resources and means needed to support the plan of action, and determine where they will come from. Is funding required? How can we get the manpower required? Do we have any of the materials already; if not where and how will we get them?

You may be asked to....

As previously mentioned, there are no mandatory requirements and there is no contractual job description for a senior spouse. If you choose to take an active role with the unit, it may be helpful to have an idea of what your role **could** include. With this in mind, we are including a list of possible responsibilities that various spouses **may** be asked to do or can initiate. Adapt this to fit your needs, the needs of your Family, and your individual situation. No matter what level of involvement you choose, lead by example.

Battalion Commander's (BN CDR) Spouse:

May be asked to:

- Serve as a leader, role model, and resource for the battalion spouses.
- Coach and mentor other spouses to work effectively in their various roles by providing information and guidance.
- Work with the CSM spouse concerning joint spouses activities and BN coffee group, support noncommissioned officers and enlisted spouses' activities and projects; remember you are a team.
- Coach/mentor company commanders' spouses and other company grade and first level field grade officers' spouses. (major)
- Work with first sergeants' wives in welcoming and farewell functions for the sergeant major's wife. Let the first sergeant's wives take the lead; your role should be to guide, support, and mentor.
- Recruit volunteers for the unit FRG.
- Have the FRG leader check FRG funds and records with the treasurer periodically to ensure compliance with regulations, if a separate battalion fund is maintained.
- Attend community monthly information meetings as needed.
- Act as an advisor to the FRG and ensure information is passed on to the FRG leader
- Make sure that any customs/courtesies etc. are applied **consistently**. Examples include welcome/farewell gifts, baby gifts, wedding gifts, and expressions of sympathy. Check periodically the support of the group that raises funds for these gifts, (usually FRG).

- Encourage active participation in military community activities.
- Promote Family support garrison agencies within the unit, such as ACS, AFTB and garrison community agencies.
- Foster points of etiquette such as responding to invitations, courtesies at official functions, etc.
- Assist the Brigade XO's spouse in giving a welcome and farewell for outgoing Brigade Commander's spouse.
- Cultivate a working relationship with other commander's spouses and senior spouses outside of the unit.
- Remain loyal to those in the unit.
- Ensure all volunteers are recognized. Informal recognition is most effective when it is immediate; many units have an annual or quarterly recognition ceremony.
- Keep the brigade commander's spouse informed about functions and activities within the battalion.
- Ensure proper transition with the incoming battalion commander's spouse
- Contribute articles to the FRG newsletter.

Work to revive or maintain the spirit of personal commitment among the spouses in the unit. Be careful not to substitute 'unit hospitality' for personal acts of warmth, kindness, and welcome to the newcomer. Be willing to implement change when necessary. It is not necessary to keep doing things because they have always been done a certain way.

Command Sergeant Major's (BN or BDE CSM) Spouse:

May be asked to:

- Serve as a role model for all noncommissioned officers and enlisted spouses in the unit.
- Be a guest or participant with commander's spouse in joint spouses' get-togethers, including the coffee group, if there is one.
- Communicate with and work as a team with commander's spouse
- Participate in welcoming first sergeants' spouses and other NCO spouses.
- Serve as a mentor and/or adviser to first sergeants' spouses and other NCO spouses.
- Support and participate in FRG activities.
- Support ceremonies and events. These might include changes of command or community activities.
- Participate in command group get-togethers, and support HHC FRG related meeting.
- Attend garrison monthly information meetings or send a representative.

As a Senior Spouse in a Non-Command Position:

You may be asked to:

- Perform the duties of the commander's spouse when he/she is not available.
- Assist the commander's spouse when help is needed or requested.
- Support FRG activities (For additional information refer to the FRG chapter in this book.)
- Serve as chairman of the welcome and farewell functions for the commander's spouse.
- Assist in the transition of the new commander's spouse and Family.
- Attend changes of command within the BN or BDE whenever possible.
- Support the smaller HHC FRG related group.
- Ensure all specific unit volunteers are recognized annually, if not quarterly.
- Serve as an example of loyalty and adaptability for the unit's spouses during transitions between commanders
- "Check in" with the commander's spouse on a regular basis, for example, every two weeks or so. This is an opportunity to observe and learn all you can about being a commander's spouse.

Regardless of the level of involvement you choose, maintain loyalty to the battalion commander's spouse.

Brigade Commander's (BDE CDR) Spouse:

May be asked to:

- Serve as the FRG steering committee leader and a resource for spouses within the BDE.
- Coach and mentor other spouses to work effectively in their various roles by providing information and guidance.
- Work with the CSM spouse concerning joint spouses activities and BDE coffee group, support noncommissioned officers and enlisted spouses' activities and projects; remember you are a team.
- Serve as an advisor on various boards or with organizations on the garrison.
- Serve as an advocate for your unit within the military community.
- Promote military community organizations within the unit; encourage active participation in community events.
- Attend unit and military community activities when invited.
- Support leaders within the unit and the community.
- Coach and mentor BDE staff and BN commanders' spouses.
- Work with other senior spouses on post to plan welcomes and farewells for other senior spouses.
- Attend changes of command within the unit whenever possible.

- Attend monthly military community information meetings and ensure that information is passed to the FRG. It is important to stay informed.
- Ensure all volunteers are recognized. Informal recognition is best when it is immediate; many units have an annual or quarterly recognition ceremony.
- Be prepared to say a few words at brigade and battalion level events, if asked. However, do not be offended if you are simply an invited guest with no official role.
- Contribute articles to the FRG newsletter.

Always lead by example and be mindful that others are watching what you do as a senior spouse.

A great resource for the **Company Commanders' Spouse** is: *The Company Commander's Spouse Battle Book*. It is available from the U.S. Army War College Military Family Program, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Evaluate Yourself as a Leader or an Advisor

1. Do you thoroughly understand the responsibilities of each position on the board or committee?
2. Are you easy to approach and talk to?
3. Are you sympathetic to the problems of others?
4. Do you compliment others when they do a good job? As an advisor, do you encourage the leader and/or group to compliment others?
5. Are you even-tempered?
6. Do you work to prevent grievances from arising? As an advisor, do you look ahead and guide the leader and/or group on how to prevent grievances from arising?
7. When complaints arise regarding yourself, do you handle them honestly and objectively? As an advisor, do you substantively advise the leader and/or group on how to handle complaints within the group? Do you advise the leader on how to handle complaints against the leadership?
8. Are you cooperative with other community organizations? As an advisor, do you guide the leader and/or group on how to be cooperative with other community organizations?
9. Do you set a good example?
10. Are you open to feedback from others?
11. Do you give constructive feedback to others?
12. Do you follow through when you say you will do something?
13. Do you make decisions based on a thorough understanding of the situation? As an advisor, do you assist the leader and/or group in gaining a thorough understanding of the situation so that the leader and/or group can make the best decision?
14. Do you provide the rationale for change, or the lack of change, when appropriate? Do you do this for the leader and/or group when you are the advisor?
15. Do you maintain a positive tone when dealing with others?
16. Do you make decisions and answer queries in a timely manner? As an advisor do you encourage the leader and/or group to be timely?

17. Do you treat others fairly and equally?
18. Are you a self-starter? As an advisor, do you help the leader/group determine if they want to do a project and help them find the best way to start?
19. Do you display self-confidence?

Resources

There are many tools and concepts available to help senior spouses fulfill their roles. Colleges, local organizations, as well as the Army Family Team Building (AFTB) program, offer classes in leadership, management, communication skills, and personal wellness. Take advantage of the resources available; do not forget your friends and neighbors – they are often a wealth of information and support.

Provided below is list of books that may be helpful when you are in a leadership position or serving as a member of an organization. It includes books that are practical and some that are useful for keeping things in the proper perspective. There are many leadership books out there; this list may give you a start.

- ✓ *The 21 Irrefutable LAWS OF LEADERSHIP* by John C. Maxwell
- ✓ *The ART and POWER of BEING A LADY* by Noelle Cleary and Dini Von Mueffling
- ✓ *FISH* by Stephen C. Lundin, PhD, Harry Paul, and John Christensen
- ✓ *High Five!* By Ken Blanchard, Sheldon Bowles, Don Carwe and Eunice Parisi-Carew
- ✓ *Leadership Secrets from the Executive Office* by George Hathaway
- ✓ *Living a Life That Matters* by Harold S. Kushner
- ✓ *Make Peace With Anyone* by David J. Lieberman, PhD
- ✓ *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* by Peter F. Drucker
- ✓ *Put Your Best Foot Forward* by Jo-Ellan Dimitrius, PhD., and Mark Mazarella
- ✓ *QBQ! The Question Behind the Question* by John Miller
- ✓ *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell
- ✓ *Tongue Fu! How To Deflect, Disarm, and Defuse Any Verbal Conflict* by Sam Horn
- ✓ *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D